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Prompted by the title of Reader, one expects, on opening the book, to find reading material, whereas the eye is greeted with a series of commands such as might be given in the early lessons of a Direct Method course, and after each order a series of blanks into which the pupil is expected to fill his answer. After three pages of orders there are three *amusettes* followed by a request to conjugate ten verbs in short sentences, to form the plural of eight nouns and to use the same nouns in short sentences. Only after nineteen pages of this sort of thing, broken by an occasional proverb, rhyme or riddle, does the pupil reach three short anecdotes. Then follow twenty-three more pages of articles, the intention of which is to give the pupil names of things. The prospectus says the book "abounds in those 'names of things' which the young pupil always likes." It certainly abounds in "names of things," but the liking of the pupil for lists of words seems somewhat questionable. Supposedly disguised under a flimsy pretense of conversation, one page gives a list of words concerning clothing and toilet articles, the next the parts of the body, succeeded by the things on a dinner table and articles of food, the parts of a house, the weather, what is to be seen in a city, the trades and so on. By the time he reaches page 50, is the child going to remember those lists that he learned on page 37 and has not been reminded of since? It does not seem likely.

The book bears traces of haste or carelessness. It is stated in the preface that the vocabulary "does not include the simple words which the learner is supposed already to have encountered frequently: articles, pronouns, numerals, etc. If he has forgotten them, he should be advised to consult his grammar." One would like to ask the author if he considers the following under such a heading: *détroit* (p. 59), *marotte* (p. 47), *poiré* (p. 52), *chance* (p. 55), *obélisque de Louqsor* (p. 68). They are not in the vocabulary. One notices such mistakes as *son* for *sont* (p. 50), *por* for *pour* (p. 29), *entends* with a third singular subject, *poète*, for *poète*, *les marseillais*, *les français*, *les espagnols*, to indicate the people.

The second half of the book is more truly a reader and will be much more likely to enlist the interest of the pupil than the first part.

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L'ITALIA By ERNEST HATCH WILKINS and ANTONIO MARINONI.
The University of Chicago Press, 1920. \$1.50 net.

The perusal of this admirable little book in the *University of Chicago Italian Series* has given the reviewer, at least after the rather tedious first chapter on the geography of Italy had been left behind, a deal of real pleasure as well as professional gratifica-

tion. It most worthily represents Italy in that rapidly increasing family of modern descriptive Readers written in the idiom of the country described, and whose eminently modern and laudable aim is to enable the language teacher to kill two birds with one stone by instructing and interesting the pupil in the speakers of that idiom and in their land, at the same time that he builds up his vocabulary and exercises him in syntax and pronunciation. A special word of praise should be given to the editors for the effective manner in which they have handled this last feature; for though the idea of utilizing phonetic symbols or italics for distinguishing vowel quality or stress is neither new nor complicated, it is something of a triumph to carry it out so consistently and persistently and withal so inoffensively to the eye as has been done here. The page is indeed marred, but—*come si fa?*—so little that the sense of irritation soon sinks into the subconscious. I apprehend, by the way, that much, very much, of this applause should go to the printers; for the style, texture, finish and general technique of the little volume are a most welcome reversion to ante-bellum standards.

In its twelve chapters the book deals with Italy's political, social, intellectual and artistic past and present in entertaining fashion, and in compact—but never dense—Italian. It is tense though, and in many passages I could not help wondering what the average American college student would be able to make out of the resounding periods. Asyndeton seems rather overworked, in spots.¹ In their Preface the authors twice emphasize their intention of presenting their matter in a "simple" style; but except for unusually gifted students this volume will hardly take the place of the still much-to-be-desired Reader for first-year classes. As a manual for practice in oral reading, however, and as a basis for exercises in conversation, it will prove invaluable; and this is doubtless the scope which its authors intended.

The subject matter is excellently presented, and the accuracy in detail exceptional. In a fairly careful reading of the whole and while rereading numerous passages the reviewer did not notice a single typographical error. But on page 9, in line 5, why is it stated that Italy is a large exporter of "gli aranci"?—do orange trees figure so notably?

A baker's dozen of good half-tone illustrations, a small but clear map of Italy, and a carefully worked out and very full vocabulary complete the book in most satisfying fashion.—A rough estimate, prompted by a not altogether idle curiosity, shows that there is an average of about forty new words to each page of text. No parsimony of vocabulary, certainly.

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¹ Notably on pages 72-78.